

Message Text

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R 290138Z JUL 76

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

UNCLAS STATE 187329

E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: EFIN, BB

SUBJECT: STATUS OF ST. VINCENT BANK

1. DEPARTMENT HAS BEEN CONTACTED BY CONGRESSMAN MOORE OF LOUISIANA REPRESENTING CONCERNS OF LAWYERS AND BANKERS IN HIS DISTRICT. BANKS HAVE ACCEPTED CASHIERS CHECKS DRAWN ON MERCHANTILE BANK AND TRUST COMPANY, KINGSTOWN, ST. VINCENT, WEST INDIES, AND THOSE CHECKS HAVE NOT BEEN HONORED WHEN PROCESSED THROUGH NORMAL BANKING CHANNELS. POTENTIAL LOSSES ARE SUBSTANTIAL. INQUIRIES THROUGH BANKING CHANNELS HAVE HAD LIMITED RESULTS. MATTER HAS BEEN REFERRED TO BANKS' INSURANCE COMPANIES AND THE FBI.

2. EMBASSY IS REQUESTED TO INVESTIGATE HOW BANK IS REGISTERED AND UNDER WHAT BANKING AUTHORITY. INFORMATION CONCERNING THE APPEARANCE OF BANK PREMISES, THE BACKGROUND OF ITS OFFICERS, THE BANK'S OPERATIONS AND REPUTATION IN THE BANKING COMMUNITY WOULD ALSO BE HELPFUL. PLEASE REPLY AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. KISSINGER

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